

Guardian

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That was the year that was 2008

January



Honour: Children's author Jacqueline Wilson is made a Dame by the Queen

□ Much loved Kingston children's author Jacqueline Wilson was made a Dame in the New Year Honours List, for her outstanding contribution to literature.

Dame Jacqueline, a former Coombe Girls' School pupil, was awarded an OBE in 2002, has been the children's laureate and has sold more than 20m books in the UK.

Also honoured was Kingston Carnival organiser John Azah, from Kingston Racial Equality Council, who picked up an OBE for services to community relations.

Grenville Tuck, caretaker of Coombe Hill Infant and Junior Schools in Kingston, picked up an MBE for services to education.

He said: "It is a really nice feeling to be recognised like this for the work I have done."

"I love my job and treat it as so much more than a nine-to-five and that's why everyone at the school put me forward for the honour."

□ Dozens of highly sensitive and urgent cancer, HIV and mental health test results carried out by Kingston Hospital, were handed into the Kingston Guardian, after being found by a member of the public dumped in a town centre street.

The 173 documents, containing the names, date of birth, GP details and NHS numbers of the patients, were found inside a courier bag in Kingston Hill on Friday, January 4, and were returned to the hospital later that day, to avoid further delays in treatment to those involved.

The documents were being transported from Kingston to Queen Mary's Hospital in Roehampton.

Kingston Hospital apologised a week later and an investigation into a possible theft was launched by Kingston police.

Carole Heatly, then chief executive of Kingston Hospital, said: "We do believe that this loss of clinical data was a very rare and unprecedented event and we would certainly not want our patients to think that we treat their records in a careless way, because we do not."

□ Kingston's Rose Theatre finally

ly flung open its doors on January 16, nearly 80 years after the idea was first dreamt up.

The £11m venue opened to the Russian classic Uncle Vanya, which was directed by Sir Peter Hall.

Frank Whately, head of the school of performance at Kingston University and a key supporter of the theatre since the 1980s, said he was "chuffed to bits" the theatre was finally open.

He praised the "powerful and influential triumvirate" of Kingstonians, the council and the university who made it a reality.

Sir Peter said before the opening night: "Whatever happens in the future, I can be proud of the fact that I had a helping hand in making sure this theatre was finished, operational and outstanding."

Just days after the theatre opened, Sir Peter announced he was stepping down as artistic director, handing over the day-to-day running to Stephen Unwin, departing artistic director of the English Touring Theatre.

Sir Peter took on a new role as director emeritus at the Rose.

February

□ It was announced that a Moroccan dish would represent Kingston at an international food festival held in its German twin-town of Oldenburg, after only three local chefs entered the competition – all with dishes not normally associated with the borough.

Mohammed Tadimi, owner of Exotic Tagine in Market Place, triumphed with his saffron and olive chicken tagine over the other entrants, a vegetarian curry and an Afro-Caribbean dish.

Mr Tadimi said he was not surprised at the international flavours of the other entrants.

He said: "Nowadays, a lot of people like to try other things and have a different feel to their food."

Mr Tadimi flew out to Oldenburg in September where he battled it out with other chefs from across Europe. His Moroccan delicacies outsold all others.



Killer: Levi Bellfield

□ "Bus stop stalker" Levi Bellfield was found guilty at the Old Bailey on February 26, of murdering Amelie Delagrange and Marsha McDonnell.

In February 2003, Marsha McDonnell, 19, was found in a pool of blood just yards from her home in Priory Road, Hampton, after Bellfield had followed her in his car after she got off the No 111 bus from Kingston.



Theatre of dreams: The Rose Theatre finally opened on January 16

Amelie Delagrange, 22, had missed her stop on the 267 bus in August 2004 and was attacked by Bellfield as she walked past Twickenham Green.

The 39-year-old, from West Drayton, west London was also convicted of trying to kill 18-year-old student Kate Sheedy as she walked home in May 2004.

The jury took six days to deliberate but failed to reach a verdict on two other counts of the kidnap and false imprisonment of Anna-Maria Rennie, 17, and the attempted murder of Irma Dragoshi, 33.

Bellfield has since been questioned by police investigating the unsolved murder of Walton schoolgirl Milly Dowler in 2002.

He will spend the rest of his life in jail.

March

□ Kingston Council announced a controversial new waste and recycling contract in March.

The contract came into force in September and saw weekly recycling collections, but rubbish collections dropped to once a fortnight.

The council said this was to boost recycling rates in the borough and avoid an estimated £10m bill in taxes and fines over the next eight years, as landfill charges double from £24 to £48 per tonne.

Councillor Liz Green, the executive member for environment and sustainability at the time of the announcement, said: "It is quite right that we should be forced to recycle more, because we need to be taking it seriously."

□ Health campaigners criticised plans to erect a booze clinic in Kingston town centre to help revellers who hurt themselves while out partying.

The plans, by town centre management group Kingston-first, were met with disdain by campaigners who called it a "sad indictment on society".

The scheme ran on Friday

and Saturday nights and was designed to alleviate pressure on the ambulance service and Kingston Hospital's accident and emergency department.

The safe place ran for five weeks in the pilot scheme from March 14 but did not continue, because of a lack of use.

□ A football coach was jailed for 30 years on March 5, for murdering Walton businesswoman Kate Beagley.

Karl Taylor, 27, from Covent Garden, was found guilty by a jury at the Old Bailey of stabbing Miss Beagley 31 times while on their first date.

Taylor lured Miss Beagley, 32, of Nelson Close, to a bench in Richmond Hill, intending to steal her car on May 30, 2007, after a date at the Roebuck Pub, Richmond.

He then stabbed her repeatedly with a carving knife he had concealed up his sleeve.

The jury took just under two hours to reach a unanimous verdict and Judge Giles Forrester sentenced Taylor to life imprisonment, with no parole for 30 years.

□ A new Sea Life Centre opened at Chessington World of Adventures on March 15.

Sharks, stingrays and seahorses were brought in from a holding centre in Weymouth for the opening.

The centre also features a

touch pool, interactive display and tanks that mimic coral reefs and deep oceanic landscapes.

The 500sq m main aquarium was brought over from Nuremberg and there are more than 25 marine life containers holding 250,000 litres.

April

□ People power was the order of the day for angry Motspur Park residents, who turned out in force to protest about plans to turn a much-loved green space behind their homes into a cemetery.

The plucky protesters also collected more than 600 signatures on a petition criticising Irish millionaire Ben Dunne's plans for the 20-acre (eight ha) cemetery on the former BBC Sports Ground site.

Mr Dunne's original plans for a state-of-the-art sports and leisure centre on the site, which were welcomed by much of the community, had to be scrapped when council officials told him the Metropolitan Open Land must remain as green space.

□ Kingston's much celebrated May Fayre event was cancelled, with organisers blaming the previous year's washout for the demise of the

previously popular event. The annual May Merrie, which had been running for more than 30 years, was a centrepiece of Kingston's events calendar and was usually split between the main May Fayre event on Fairfield and free music, dance and entertainment activities around the town centre on bank holiday Monday.

Organiser Kingston Round Table confirmed it would take a year out to regroup and come back bigger and stronger than before.

□ The 19-year-old man due to stand trial for murdering father-to-be Mikey Brown at the Works nightclub in Kingston, made a dramatic change of plea at the Old Bailey.

Shaun Greenidge from Hilary Avenue, Mitcham, entered a guilty plea for the lesser charge of manslaughter, sparing Mr Brown's family a two-week murder trial and avoiding a potential life sentence.

Mr Brown, 23, had been fatally stabbed on June 23, 2007, after an argument started over one of his friends bumping into Greenidge's girlfriend.

The Crown Prosecution Service and the defence lawyers agreed a change of charge and plea based on the fact there was "an unlawful dangerous act" but "no intention to kill".



Water world: The new Sea Life Centre, complete with stingrays, sharks and seahorses, opened at Chessington World of Adventures on March 15

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Summing up the summer

May



Kicker: Sean Duggan and Derek Osbourne handing in the petition to save the post offices Deadlinex KT20026

Thousands of people signed the Surrey Comet's Save our Post Office petition, but there were emotional scenes as the Post Office decided to shut all six branches it had proposed to close.

The decision sparked anger among those who had worked so hard to save the branches, and Kingston Council's tentative suggestion that it's buildings could hold branches looked to be the only hope.

Kingston and Surbiton MP Edward Davey said he was angry and disappointed, adding that people would be left wondering whether the consultation exercise was a complete farce.

Almost 2,500 people signed Comet petitions in shops and newsagents, with a further 231 voting online.

A fatal fire caused chaos in Kingston after a police van rushing to the scene collided with a VW Polo.

Former military man David Brance, 70, was killed in the bedroom of his Richmond Road home after a "smouldering" house fire.

Hours later police intercepted his wife Margaret and broke the tragic news after she had landed at an airport following a school reunion in Germany.

About 15 minutes after the original call, a police van on the way to the fire with its sirens blaring crashed at high speed with a silver Polo, sending both vehicles into the front of The Queen's Head pub.

Meanwhile, firefighters from

Surbiton and Kingston had kicked the door down and put the fire out within about 10 minutes, but discovered the body inside the smoke damaged house.

Kingston NHS board members were asked to resign, after neglecting to read a 17-page independent report before closing the Springboard centre for people with learning difficulties and mental health problems.

Only two board members had visited the centre before making the decision, which eventually saw the Tolworth Hospital based service shut and handed over to three charities to save Kingston Primary Care Trust more than £400,000 a year.

Joyce Rhodes, whose son attended Springboard, said at the time she was devastated, and added that the decision was all about money.

But chief executive David Smith said his advice was that the uncertainty about Springboard needed to be brought to an end.

June

Plans for the four star hotel and eight-storey block of flats in Skerne Road, Kingston, were finally given the green light after years of wrangling and waiting.

Councillors were won over by the latest modified plans from NHP Leisure, granting planning permission for the hotel and conference facility and 256 flats.

An earlier application for a larger development on the former power station site, with a 16-storey section, had been rejected in November after objections.

Kingston Chamber of Commerce chief executive Lisa Gagliani described the planned hotel as "another piece in the jigsaw puzzle to make Kingston a true destination".

A pair of Kingston secondary schools were threatened with closure by the Government, unless they improved their performance in GCSE examinations.

Chessington Community College (CCC) and Coombe Boys' School, New Malden, were given three years to hit the 30 per cent threshold for pupils achieving five or more A* to C grades - which both schools smashed later in the year.

David Kemp, headteacher at CCC, said he felt the school was being punished by the Government for being so inclusive of students without English as a first language, while a spokesman for Kingston Council said it was confident both schools would improve.

Mr Kemp said at the time: "In terms of maths and science we achieve very high, but we have a lot of pupils from places such as Korea and Sri Lanka who, despite being hardworking students, struggle to get a C in English."

New Malden residents sick of having their High Street dug up had to brace themselves for more disruption, after Kingston Council officers admitted the current works were just a "delaying tactic" to stop the road giving way.

Businesses and shoppers had been plagued with traffic bottlenecks and pneumatic drills since the council decided to make the High Street more pedestrian-friendly three years earlier, while the cost of the works had spiralled to £2.3m.

Cracks in the plan had started to show almost as soon as the first phase was complete, with pits and tears appearing in the road surface where the heaviest work had been done.

Reporting to the Maldens and Coombe neighbourhood committee, council highways officer David White said at the time, that the recent work would not be enough to prevent the road cracking again.

July

A fire tore through Kingston's ancient Market Place, gutting two stalls and damaging two others. Traders were left devastated after the blaze, which they suspected was deliberately started.

Among the worst hit was Charlie Kent's stall, which was



Thrilled with success

set up by his great-grandfather in Market Place 150 years ago.

He lost two sets of scales worth about £750 each, smaller scales worth £300 each, and about £800 worth of other items.

Town leaders spoke of their sadness and shock at the popular stalls going up in smoke and Kingston council helped the traders get back up and running a few days later with temporary stalls.

Kingston firefighters had to cut a man out of a titanium chastity belt, which he intended to use for sex games.

He had spent most of the day trying to free himself and was slipping in and out of consciousness because of the pressure on his genitals.

After realising that neither he or his girlfriend had a key for it, he swallowed his pride and called for help. The man, thought to be in his 40s, was very embarrassed and apologetic and protected his modesty with a dressing gown when firefighters arrived. Three different machines were needed to cut through the belt and he was given oxygen to help him cope with the pain. He was later taken to Kingston Hospital.

August

A 45-year old woman died in front of dozens of commuters at Surbiton station when she was hit by an 80 mph train as she crossed the tracks.

Christine Johnson died instantly when she was struck by the non-stop Salisbury to Waterloo train.

Witnesses looked on in horror as she tried to climb back up on to the platform but did not make it in time.

Train staff, who were traumatised by the event, had tried to warn her off the tracks but were unsuccessful. The incident caused severe delays during the Friday rush hour and fights between frustrated commuters were reported to have broken out at Waterloo station.

Another man died after being hit by a train in the same place less than three months later.

A good samaritan who stopped to help at the scene of a road accident discovered the woman who lay dying in the road was his own wife, a Kingston worker.

James Peters had been on his way to pick up his wife Susan from work when he came across the scene, just yards

from where he usually picked her up.

Mr Peters parked up and went to see if he could help the injured lady, and only realised it was his wife when he was passed her handbag and he recognised it. Mrs Peters had worked for Surrey County Council in Kingston for 15 years.

Pupils at two Kingston schools threatened with closure by the Government, threw off their "failing school" tags by scoring record results in this year's GCSE examinations.

Chessington Community College (CCC) and Coombe Boys' School, New Malden, were told they risked being shut down if the percentage of pupils gaining five or more A* to C grades, including English and maths, did not reach 30 per cent within three years.

But both schools smashed that target in this year's results by 5 and 4 per cent respectively.

Elsewhere in the borough, Tiffin Girls' School was top of the class with 91.5 per cent of grades either A* or A, while the boys at Tiffin School were only slightly behind with a record result of 82.91 per cent.



Kicker: Caption Deadlinex KT20823

September

□ A theatre critic's boycott of the Rose Theatre, instigated after he got lost going there in January, could affect the town's fight to attract audiences, a leading theatre magazine said.

David Lister, arts editor of The Independent, penned his acid remarks as part of a wider critique of access to theatres, after struggling to find

his way to the riverside venue – and put the blame on Sir Peter Hall.

His comments angered theatre supporters after he incorrectly claimed the nearby car parks are closed in the evening, and his remarks were described by deputy leader of the council, Councillor Barry O'Mahony, as "pretty petty".

Peter Foot from theatre magazine Encore warned that "you can't underestimate the power of the national press" and criticised Kingston for being slow

in advertising its services.

□ A man set himself on fire in his Surbiton flat and ran into street, terrifying onlookers and causing neighbours to be trapped inside their burning building.

Barmack Karimi, 39, who died a few hours later in hospital, was seen running out of his flat while still on fire wearing "shredded clothes".

Neighbours in the other flats above Yum Cha Chinese restaurant in Brighton Road were rescued by the landlord of the Black Lion pub and another mysterious hero, who fought the flames with the pub's fire extinguisher.

It later emerged that Karimi had been in court for beating his wife and had been banned from returning to their flat while on bail.

His wife has since left the area and new tenants have moved in.

□ Kingston's Apple Market became a quieter place when a popular violinist busker downed his bow and packed up in protest, after receiving anonymous complaints that he was playing too loud. Classically-trained Phil Morgan, a former head of music at Surbiton High School, circulated a letter to traders saying he was no longer going to perform in the Apple Market because of the "atmosphere".

He was told about the complaints by town rangers and said he felt "stabbed in the back".

Staff at Holland and Barratt health food store started a petition to entice him back.



September: Phil Morgan decided to face the music



October: The devil's car had to be exorcised by Julian Clarke

October

□ "Satan's car" rolled into Long Ditton before Halloween, and was finally cast out when faced with a bible and a cross, if a Christian family is to be believed.

The "sinister" black Pontiac Trans Am had blacked out windows, 666 on the number plate, devils on all four wheels and had not moved for a month.

Churchgoer Julian Clarke tried to exorcise the demonic-looking auto.

Posing for pictures, he said: "The car is like the spawn of the devil. It could only look more evil if it had horns."

But on the web, Angryresi-

dent said: "If it didn't have at least one horn, it would fail the MoT."

□ Frozen assets in Icelandic banks left worried investors biting their nails, but sharp-minded public servants in Kingston, one a former betting shop manager, dodged a financial bullet.

Stung by their experiences with Northern Rock, treasury officials pulled £5m from Landsbanki when it lost its triple A rating.

The cash was safely back in the council's coffers weeks before it collapsed. Leader of the council, Councillor Derek Osbourne, was bemused that neighbouring boroughs such as Surrey County Council, which could still lose £10m of

taxpayers' money, had not followed suit.

□ Police officers did their job when they stopped, searched and arrested a teenager with a scary-looking bayonet hunting knife wrapped inside his suitcase in Eden Street.

But the prosecution was blunted when a Kingston judge hurled out the case, saying prosecutors were picking on the 19-year-old and had not even bothered to check his alibi. Judge Richard Atchley, who painted an innocent picture of himself as an amateur cook buying Sabatier knives from John Lewis, said: "There is one law in this country and it is the same for you and Mr Garrigan and it should have been from the beginning."

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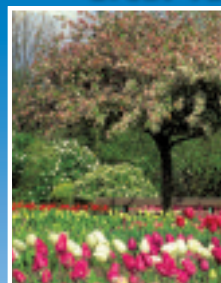
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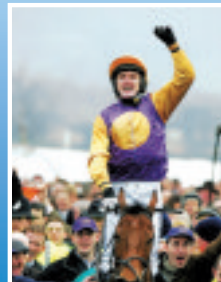
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November

2008

December



November: Mr Superfly and his creator

November

□ The BBC's Nick Robinson failed to swat an irritatingly addictive song sensation created by a Kingston mum and her daughter. Trying to create a buzz for Christmas number 1, Mr Superfly crashed the News at 10 after announcing his arrival on the music scene in November.

□ No more public funding for the Rose Theatre was the council's policy, despite a couple of overspend hiccups.

But the news that the cash-strapped Rose Theatre was in negotiations for up to £600,000-a-year to extend its work came as a bolt from the blue.

Rose chief executive David Fletcher and Liberal Democrat council leader Councillor Derek Osbourne said taxpayers would see more access for young and vulnerable people and more community work in return for the money.

But theatre critic and Labour councillor Steve Mama said a flow of public money had been

on the cards for the "white elephant" since before it opened. The money was approved to rounds of applause in the council chamber in December.

□ Tesco unveiled its latest plans for a giant supermarket and more than 500 flats by the A3 in Tolworth, trying to sweeten residents with a five-storey community centre on the former MoD site. But fears about congestion indicated the corporation could be facing another fierce backlash over its 60,000 sq ft store. Tesco said that after a redevelopment of the A3 roundabout, there would be "nil detriment". It was second time lucky for the supermarket chain after it withdrew its first blueprint last year.

□ The Liberal Democrats who run Kingston Council decided after careful consideration they would build a new secondary school in north Kingston.

They denied they were bowing to public pressure from delighted mums, but their own website slated the Conservatives' continued demands for a school, saying they were "deeply irresponsible".

The about face was presented as a re-think after population data finally added up, but critics believed the move was an attempt to win votes.

Campaigner Angela Norton-Bilsby said: "This is not about winning or losing or political battles."

"It is about our children's right to get a good education at a school they really want to attend."

December

□ Patrick Katende was found dead in a lift shaft on the Cambridge Gardens estate hours after reports of a burglary at a nearby computer shop.

The family of the 21-year-old, known as Pistol P, said he was a "lovely guy who loved life", admitted he was no angel but denied he was a gang member.

His funeral at Kingston Cemetery, on what would have been his 22nd birthday, was attended by hundreds of mourning friends and family. Police are still trying to discover how he died and whether it was connected to a pursuit after the burglary.

□ Dubbed King Pong, it was a case of gorillas in the mist as the apes at Chessington World of Adventures were told Brussels sprouts were off the Christmas menu after zoo-goers complained about the whiff of flatulence emanating from their enclosure. A strict diet of vegetables, fruits, nuts and leaves were available during opening hours but, after the guests leave, their favourite sprouts were being handed over in the evenings, letting them trumpet to their heart's content.

On Christmas Day, when the zoo closed, they were allowed to eat sprouts all day long.

□ Raven's Ait Ltd fell victim to the credit crisis and went into administration. After years of successful trading, Raven's Ait closed suddenly, blaming the credit crunch and leaving sev-



December: Tributes left to Patrick Katende who was found dead in a lift shaft on the Cambridge Gardens

eral companies with no Christmas party and many wedding plans in tatters.

Alexis Pelling and Byron Holloway, both 26, lost £12,500 and were left with a frantic rush to rebook another venue for their wedding breakfast and reception on December 20.

Mr Holloway said: "We were devastated. When Alexis found out she phoned me up crying".

It was then announced that Raven's Ait may change its name to Antoinette Island, after interest from Kingston-based Antoinette Hotel.

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2. What is the special name given to the day after Christmas Day?
3. What date does Christmas Day fall on each year?

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On Street Parking

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Opening Hours for Council Car Parks and the Parking Shop:

	Christmas Eve	Christmas Day	Boxing Day	New Years Eve	New Years Day
Cattle Market Car Park	7:00am - Midnight	Closed	10am-Midnight	7:00am - Midnight	10:00am - Midnight
The Bittoms Car Park	7:45am - 7:00pm	Closed	Closed	7:45am - 7:00pm	10:00am - 6:00pm
The Rose Car Park	7:30am - Midnight	Closed	Closed	7:30am - Midnight	10:00am - Midnight
The Parking Shop	8:45am - 3:00pm	Closed	Closed	8:45am - 3:00pm	Closed

Other Car Parks will be open as usual on all other days. Ashdown Road and Canbury Place Car Parks will be open throughout the period. Opening hours and parking charge information is available at:

www.kingston.gov.uk/parking_information

The Parking Shop, located inside Guildhall 2, High Street, Kingston upon Thames, will be open Monday to Saturday, 8:45am to 5:30 pm on all other days.

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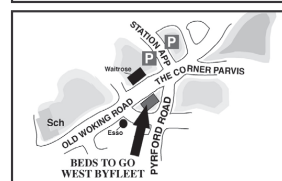
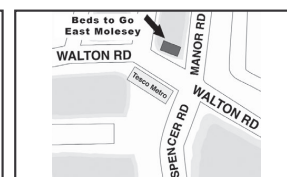
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Peter Pan, Fairfield Halls, Croydon

Graham Moody

After seeing my first panto in more than 15 years on Sunday, I can safely say it won't be as long before I go again.

I may have been two decades older than the average age of the audience at Fairfield Hall's production of Peter Pan, but that didn't stop me joining in with the boos, cheers and "oh no you're nots".

Brian Blessed, as Captain Hook, was naturally the chief protagonist, often being left alone to interact with the audience, and you could tell he thoroughly enjoyed himself.

His portrayal of the villain was brilliantly nasty as his every move was booed.

He even rolled back the years for a quite energetic swordfight with Peter Pan.

He was, however, in danger of being upstaged by Carl Johns's fantastic portrayal of Smee.

The three-time world disco-dancing champion seemed to be in his element getting the audience involved at every opportunity and he and Blessed bounced off each other superbly.

Steven Butler and Jodie Jacobs have great chemistry playing Pan and Wendy, ably supported by the dancing and singing Lost Boys.

Even the youngest performers, from the Betty Wivell Academy of Performing Arts, managed to amaze.

The story, of course, follows JM Barrie's original, with a few additions for the panto – modern hits like Men In Black and I Believe I Can Fly.

The only part I was a bit critical of was the opening dancing and singing scene, which seemed to have little relation to Peter Pan.

All in all, though, it was a fantastic two hours and the only thing that left me a little disappointed was the fact I have to wait a year for panto to come around again.

Peter Pan, Fairfield Halls, Park Lane, January 4, £16 to £22.50, call 020 8688 9291 or visit fairfield.co.uk for more information.

There is something a little curious about going to a panto and not hearing the infamous yells of, "He's behind you!" or the age-old exchange, "Oh no it isn't... Oh yes it is".

But this panto is no stickler for tradition – and that's not a bad thing.

Suzie McKenna's script provides a riot of contemporary jokes, drawing on the credit crunch to the X Factor, and, of course, gives vocal chameleon Alistair McGowan (Baron Hardup) the opportunity to fire into his rip-roaring repertoire of impressions,

Cinderella, New Wimbledon Theatre

Katy Moon

which include Dot Branning and David Beckham.

There are plenty of surprises in this playful production. The Fairy Godmother (Louise Dearman) sets her sights on being Mrs Baron Hardup and, in a shock twist, before Cinderella (played by the delightful Joanna Page of TV's Gavin and Stacey fame) can see if the glass slipper fits, it gets smashed!

Fret not, this paves the way for some audience interaction as everyone is urged to search for the other missing slipper.

These strokes of genius are coupled with some great tunes, with former Pop Idol runner-up Gareth Gates starring as Prince Charming – who better to lead the audience into a sing-a-long to Spirit In The Sky?

But with the nation currently experiencing X Factor fever, the jewel in the crown has to be Gate's rendition of Mariah

Carey's song Hero – fittingly a firm favorite with talent show contestants.

Graham Hordley and Andrew Ryan's renditions of Ugly Sisters Lavinia and Lucinda (better known as toilet-humoured Lav and Lu) are freakishly fabulous.

It is not just the performances that sparkle, the costumes and stage are adorned with lashings of glorious glitter – an uplifting sight in these penny-pinching times. Plus, the pumpkin carriage is drawn by adorable Shetland ponies!

To sum up, as Joanna Page's Cinderella would cry in her honey-toned Welsh accent: "It's lush!"

Cinderella, New Wimbledon Theatre, The Broadway, Wimbledon, until January 18. Call 0870 060 6646 or visit theambassadors.com/newwimbledon for more information.



Pictures: Anthony Luvera

The Sorcerer's Apprentice, Charles Cryer Theatre

Andrew Richards

A short and sweet show from In The Wings wafts into the Charles Cryer like a sprinkle of fairy dust, brightening a wet Saturday afternoon.

Successfully merging the traditional and populist in The Sorcerer's Apprentice, Wings has picked the Goethe poem of the same name, which inspired Walt Disney's 1940 film Fantasia, in which Mickey Mouse plays the role of the apprentice.

Throughout Drew McKenzie's tight script – he is also moonlighting as the Sorcerer – these influences are laid bare and go over the heads of the under-eights crowd like stealth bombers in black ops.

Lively, colourful and with a DIY charm that is impossible to dislike (the Wimbledon College of Art and Design students have outdone themselves), Wings' hour-long tale tells the story of a young boy plucked from poverty who, through many adventures, is introduced to the mysterious and magical world of sorcery.

The cast throw themselves into the roles with vigour, Carole Carpenter and Dan Gingell (as the apprentice) especially. The normally gregarious, booming McKenzie almost withdraws into the background as one of the central characters, the sorcerer. Possibly, his dual role as scriptwriter meant he was just happy to watch the show as well as star in it.

The standout moments are the brilliantly frantic Fantasia sequence, when the apprentice tries to perform magic by himself, plus Gingell's mad dash around the set, shouting "poo" and "bum" – the place erupted with laughter.

The Sorcerer's Apprentice, Charles Cryer Theatre, Carshalton, ages three to eight, until December 24, 11am, 2pm, 4.30pm, £9, family £32, call 020 8770 4950.

Theatre listings

Disney's Fantasia. £9.
COLOUR HOUSE THEATRE, Merton Abbey Mills, Merantum Way, Wimbledon. 020 8542 5511.

□ Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. Until Feb 1. Classic story gets full Colour House treatment. £7.
EPSOM PLAYHOUSE, Ashley Avenue. 01372 742555. epsomplayhouse.co.uk

□ Peter Pan. Dec 19-Jan 11. Spillers Pantomimes present the spectacular pantomime

with a big professional cast. Swashbuckling adventure with stunning scenery, flying effects, and hi-tech projection scenes. Shows at 11am, 2.30pm and 6.30pm most days. £7.60-£14.50.
LEATHERHEAD THEATRE, 7 Church Street. 01372 365141. leatherheadtheatre.co.uk

□ Aladdin and his Wonderful Lamp. Until Jan 3. A magic carpet ride to the mysterious and entrancing east. £11-£14.

NEW WIMBLEDON THEATRE, The Broadway. 0870 0606646. newwimbledontheatre.co.uk

□ Cinderella. Dec 5-Jan 18. Starring Gareth Gates as Prince Charming, Joanna Page as Cinderella and Alistair McGowan as Baron Hardup. £15-£27.
NEW WIMBLEDON THEATRE STUDIO, The Broadway. 0870 060 6646. newwimbledontheatre.co.uk

□ The Snow Queen. Until Jan 11. Based on Hans Christian Anderson story using puppetry and songs. £10.

ORANGE TREE THEATRE, 1 Clarence Street, Richmond. 020 8940 3633. orangetreetheatre.co.uk
□ Mary Goes First. Until Jan

31. Political shenanigans as an election approaches in this delightful 1913 comedy by Henry Arthur Jones. £12-£19.
POLKA THEATRE, The Broadway, Wimbledon. 020 8543 4888. polkatheatre.com

□ Pinocchio. Until Feb 7. Children's classic brought to life by Polka patron Michael Rosen. For ages six-plus. £13-£15.

□ How To Catch a Star. Until Feb 28. For ages two to five. Wordless performance of Oliver Jeffers' delightful picture book. £7-£8.

RICHMOND THEATRE, The Green. 0870 0606651. richmondtheatre.net

□ Peter Pan. Until Jan 11. A spectacular journey of wonder and excitement into the magical world of Neverland. Starring Bonnie Langford. £19-£26.

ROSE THEATRE, 24-26 High Street, Kingston. 0871 230 1552. rosetheatrekingston.org

□ A Christmas Carol. Until Jan 3. Charles Dickens play adapted for the stage by Karen Louise Hebden. Mean and miserly, Ebenezer Scrooge has lost all compassion for human kind, rejects the festive season and goodwill to all men. £7-£29.50.

BATTERSEA ARTS CENTRE, Lavender Hill. 020 7223 2223. bac.org.uk

□ Between The Devil and The Deep-Blue Sea. Until Jan 3. Award-winning 1927 have circumnavigated the globe in search of circus sideshow curiosities and silent films, noir night music and fine flapper dancers. £10-£16.

CHARLES CRYER THEATRE, High Street, Carshalton. 020 8770 6990. suttontheatres.co.uk

□ The Sorcerer's Apprentice. Until Dec 24. Loosely based on the Goethe poem made famous by Micky Mouse and

You are literally entering the mouth of hell upon going to see *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea* at the BAC, as you walk into the theatre through the sinister smile of Satan.

Eighty minutes later we left, our souls a little lighter having laughed unashamedly at a collection of 10 macabre fairytales told with clipped precision in BBC accents by Suzanne Andrade, Esme Appleton and Lillian Henley at the piano.

Told with twinkles in the eye and with wry smiles on the lips, the ladies employ the antiquated art of music hall and black and white grainy film to create an atmosphere akin to being immersed in a silent film.

But it is the way they interact with filmed and animated projections that is spectacular to watch. Andrade herself admitted it took lots of practice to time the movement of their bodies to coincide with the image on screen.

Illustrating this technique is the first vignette – *The Nine Deaths of Choo Choo Le Chat*, who suffers a series of nasty terminations, including falling from a great height and being tied to train tracks.

The show moves at a rapid pace and the story of twin girls, who are looking for a new playmate after their parents die in an unfortunate wishing well accident, encourages audience participation – will you be sitting in the hot seat?

My favourite tale was of

Between The Devil And The Deep Blue Sea, BAC

Kate Finburg



the little girl in the blue dress who ventures into the forest, paying no heed to the blatant warning signs screaming, ‘Turn Back, Sin Here!’ and meets a sticky end at the hands of a creep-er reminiscent of a character from the *Mighty Boosh*.

If you are allergic to cheesy panto this festive season, BTDATDBS is the perfect antidote.

Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea, BAC, Lavender Hill. Extended by popular demand until January 10 (some dates no shows). 7.30pm/2pm. Tuesdays Pay What You Can, £10-£16. 0207 223 2223 or bac.org.uk



Christmas ghost: Ebenezer Scrooge (John Ramm) and Jacob Marley (Adrian Schiller)
Chris Pearsall

A Christmas Classic

A Christmas Carol, Rose Theatre, Kingston

Alita Howe

When I interviewed artistic director Stephen Unwin about the Rose Theatre's first Christmas production back in October, his vision was clear: ‘I want people to walk in and say wow,’ he said. ‘I knew this had to be the thing that won over the public.’

The Rose has had a difficult first year financially – so has its first foray into the difficult realm of Christmas cheer been a success?

Mr Unwin directs a superb, if largely unknown, cast in Karen Louise Hebden's adaptation of the Dickens' classic and John Ramm is an excellent Scrooge, delivering his trademark ‘bah humbug’ lines with gusto.

Daniel Goode is particularly effective as the downtrodden yet enduringly likeable Bob Cratchitt

and special mention should go to the excellent Brigid Zengeni as Mrs Cratchitt.

The cast also includes 12 local children who were chosen after open auditions and, during our visit, the youngsters really stepped up to the mark to deliver fantastic performances.

My only gripe was the ghosts, with *The Ghost of Christmas Past* sent the only one who looked in keeping with the production.

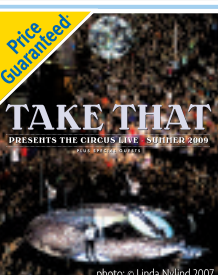
The Ghost of Christmas Past resembled a blond 70s punk star, not the white-robed, androgynous figure described by Dickens.

Similarly, the Darth Vader look-alike, which represented the Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come certainly was fearsome but its flashing eyes were a little trite.

However, the scenery, comedy elements, and heart-warming story had the entire audience enraptured and, with the Rose's first anniversary looming and its livelihood hanging in the balance, the theatre hasn't done itself any harm at all with this cracking production.

A Christmas Carol, Rose Theatre, until January 3, £7-£29.50, call 0871 230 1552, rosetheatrekingston.org.

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Peter Pan, Richmond Theatre

Will Gore

to boo and hiss him.

Ever the professional, Langford grins and spins her way through her engaging performance and the company's enthusiasm is infectious.

Samantha Gifford excels as Wendy Darling and Tony Rudd perhaps steals the show as Smee, the pirate with a very little brain.

An experienced panto jester, Rudd has the kids in the palm of his hand and, with a nod and a wink, gets away with some more risqué gags for the parents, too (his bottom is not perfect due to the crack in it, apparently!). A particular highlight of the

show is the pirates' song, led by Smee, in which the nautical naughty boys detail the career path they would have taken had the pirate racket not paid off for them.

The result is a mind-boggling chorus in which the pirates extol the virtues of Del Boy, the Daleks, Vicky Pollard and, most popular of all, Spongebob Squarepants.

The panto stays faithful to JM Barrie's much-loved original tale and the action plays out on some impressive sets – a larger-than-life cartoon world of pirate galleons and underground hide-aways is successfully evoked.

The story unfolds at a fair pace and with a great sense of fun – as ever, Richmond Theatre has given panto lovers a cracking Christmas present.

Peter Pan, Richmond Theatre, The Green, until Sunday, January 11, see richmondtheatre.net or call 0870 060 6651.

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BMW 316i Silver 03/03 Beautiful condition throughout, 79000 miles MOT July 2009 Road fund Jan 2009 £6495 020 8641 3657 07853 948351

Ford

FORD FOCUS 1.8lx hatch 2003/03 only 48,000 miles, drives superbly, good condition, air conditioned, electric windows, c/locking, cd stereo, history £3,295 alloys, fsh, 359 802 www.kingswoodmotorco.co.uk(T)

Ford

FORD MONDEO 2.0 16V zetec, 2000/W, 5door manual, only 72,000m, full ford service history aircon cd alloys, tax, Met black £1350 tel 020 8761 8090 (T)

Ford

FORD FOCUS Ghia, 2.0TDCi, 5 door, 2007/07, silver, 6 speed, p/steering, abs, alloys, climate, cruise, CD, rear PDC, walnut, one owner, 15,000 miles, ford s/history & warranty 2010, £9995 01737 830517 www.risegreen.com (T)

Ford

FORD FOCUS 1.6 lx automatic, 2005-05 only five thousand mile, one careful disabled motability owner (not modified) 5 door, air conditioned electric windows cd stereo £4995 01737 359 802 www.kingswoodmotorco.co.uk(T)

Citroen

CITROEN C3 Auto XTR, 5 door, 2004/04, only 22,000 miles, Citroen, aircon, full length sunroof, alloy, roof bars, CD, silver £4500 tel 020 8761 8090 (T)

Citroen

CITROEN C4 SX 1.6 automatic, 2005 (September), only 15000 miles, one disabled motability owner, modified, climate control, e/sunroof, immaculate throughout, history £5995 01737 359 802 www.kingswoodmotorco.co.uk(T)

Citroen

CITREON XSARA Picasso 1.6sx, 2001 Y, air conditioned, tinted electric windows, really outstanding condition, lovely metallic sky blue body, just service and MOTD, history £2995 01737 359 802 www.kingswoodmotorco.co.uk(T)

Fiat

FIAT DOBLO multi jet, .13 Diesel wheelchair access, 2008 floor, 2008, only three hundred miles, takes passenger in wheelchair plus 3 others high roof, authentique model, one owner motability marked silver grey body work, electric windows, manufactures warranty £9,995 01737 359802 www.kingswoodmotorco.co.uk (T)

Fiat

FIAT PANDA eleganza luxury model, 2007/04, only 11,000 miles, one private owner, immaculate, metallic blue, air conditioned, electric windows, cd stereo, alloys, history, economical 50mpg £3,990 01737 359802 www.kingswoodmotorco.co.uk (T)

Fiat

FIAT BRAVO 1.9 M-jet, t/diesel, sport 150, latest model, 2007/57, speed, p/steering, abs, alloys, aircon, metallic, e/windows, c/locking, heated mirrors, one owner, 7,000 miles, just serviced, fiat warranty late 2010 £995 01737 830517 www.risegreen.com (T)

Ford

FORD FIESTA 1.25L, 03 Reg, light blue, 39000 miles, CD player £2250 ono 07882 627411

Mitsubishi

MITSUBISHI SPACESTAR 1.8S, estate, 5 door, 2003/53, black, 5 speed, p/steering, abs, alloys, aircon, CD, e/sunroof, roofrails, driver info pack, one owner, 36,000 miles, s/history, new MOT, £3850 01737 830517 www.risegreen.com (T)

Hyundai

HYUNDAI SONATA 2.0 CRTD, CDX, t/diesel, saloon, 2006/56, 6 speed manual, p/steering, abs, alloys, climate, cruise, CD, full leather, latest model, 9,000 miles, hyundai s/history & warranty 2011, £8995 01737 830517 www.risegreen.com (T)

Mazda

MAZDA 323 GSE 1.5 5door manual, 2000/W, only 35,000m, history aircon alloys met royal blue £2250 tel 020 8761 8090 (T)

Mercedes

MERCEDES A140 elegance auto, 5door, hatch, silver, V reg, 60,000m, alarm, 1year mot, 6month tax, 2owners, aircon, cd player PAS, all electric mint cond, FMSH Private sale £3250ono 01737 550 377 07852 624 694

Mercedes

MERCEDES A150 automatic classic, SE, 2005-05, only 9000 miles, one disabled owner not modified, immaculate silver body work, black interior, or, nate control, cd stereo, tinted electric windows, must be seen £8495 01737 359 802 www.kingswoodmotorco.co.uk(T)

Skoda

SKODA OCTAVIA elegance estate 2.0 turbo 2002/52 manual, aircon, park sensors alloy full history met blue £2200 tel 020 8761 8090 (T)

Suzuki

SUZUKI GRAND VITARA 19DDSi, t/diesel, 2008/09, kashmir, blue metallic, 5 speed, p/steering, abs, alloys, climate, CD, side steps, e/windows, c/locking, driver info pack, one owner, 4,000 miles only as new suzuki warranty 2011, £11,995 www.risegreen.com (T)

Volkswagen

VOLKSWAGEN POLO 1.4 SE automatic, 2005 (October), only 19,000 miles, one disabled motability owner, (not modified), e/windows, a/con, alloys, CD stereo, immaculate throughout £6495 01737 359 802 www.kingswoodmotorco.co.uk(T)

Volvo

VOLVO S40 2.0SE, t/diesel, 2006 model, 6 speed, manual, p/steering, abs, alloys, climate, cruise, CD, roofrails, full leather, metallic, one owner, 27,000 miles, Volvo S/history, just serviced £10,995 01737 830517 www.risegreen.com (T)

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